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JOHN S. COFFMAN FAMILY

The John S. Coffman family, Elkhart, Indiana, about 1890. Left to right. Front row: John S. Coffman, Barbara, Mrs. John S. Coffman (Elizabeth Heatwole Coffman), Daniel. Back row: Anna Sowers (hired girl), Samuel Frederick, Jacob, Fanny, William, Ansel.

The Sonnenberg Cemetery

SIMON W. SOMMER

A few brave Mennonite families in April 1819 left their ancestral homes in Canton Bern, Switzerland, in quest of a more favorable environment. One of the first emigrants, Peter Lehman, a man well-informed in geography, served as a good counsellor for the group.

These people settled in Sugarcreek Township, Wayne County, Ohio. In honor of Sonnenberg which they had left back home in the Jura Mountains, they named this community by the same name. With the arrival of a minister, Hans Lehman, in 1821, religious services began in private homes. In 1834 they erect-

ed, of hewn logs, the first building for public worship. From the beginning until 1861 their dead were buried on a knoll between two ravines in a woods one-half mile northeast of the present Sonnenberg Church.

In approximately 1900 David A. Schneck erected a marker on the original cemetery. The inscription, in German, is given below in translation.

First cemetery of the Swiss
Mennonite Church
During the years 1823 until 1861

A Memorial
Here rest many weary Pilgrims
who for Jesus bravely struggled

joyfully. They shall someday arise and go to be with Jesus in Heaven.

A new marker, located on the spot where the first house for public worship had stood, with the title "Pioneer Settlers of Sonnenberg" was dedicated on June 26, 1960. Following a program at the Sonnenberg Mennonite Church, the dedication service was held at the new marker, with a talk and a dedicatory prayer by Clayton Swartzendruber. Speakers on the program in the church were Simon Sommer, Louis Amstutz, Reuben Hofstetter, Merle Lehman, and Dr. John Klausen. The original cemetery is located on the crest of a knoll approximately one-half mile northeast of the new marker.

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THE SONNENBERG CEMETERY

(Continued from Page 1)

The following fifty-nine adults are buried in the old cemetery:

	Date of Death
1. Elizabeth Gerber, Wife of Ulrich Gerber, Minister	Sept. 1823
2. John Lugenbuhl	July 1833
3. Barbara (Gerber) Lehman	Feb. 1834
4. John Tschantz, Father of Deacon Abraham Tschantz	Mar. 1834
5. Elizabeth (Schneck) Sommer	Apr. 1834
6. Anna (Lehman) Tschantz	May 1834
7. Barbara Welty	Apr. 1836
8. Peter Welty	July 1836
9. Peter Hofstetter	Sept. 1837
10. John Lehman	Mar. 1839
11. Anna Gerber	Apr. 1839
12. Peter Sommer	Dec. 1839
13. David Kirchofer	Dec. 1839
14. Ulrich Welty	Aug. 1840
15. Michael Gerber, Deacon	May 1841
16. John Gerber	Jan. 1842
17. John Welty	Apr. 1843
18. Magdalena Lehman	Mar. 1843
19. Barbara (Lehman) Lehman	Apr. 1843
20. Peter Lehman	Oct. 1843
21. John Heierly, Minister	Aug. 1844
22. Katherine (Lehman) Tschantz	Mar. 1845
23. Anna Kirchofer	Oct. 1845
24. Elizabeth (Baumgardner) Moses	Dec. 1845
25. Barbara Kirchofer	May 1846
26. John Lehman, Minister	July 1846
27. Jacob Lugenbuhl	1846
28. Barbara (Beer) Neuenschwander	Mar. 1847
29. Verena (Neuecommer) Bixler	May 1847
30. Barbara Amstutz	Apr. 1847
31. Elizabeth (Blatter) Steiner	May 1847
32. John Ulrich Steiner	Oct. 1847
33. Abraham Zuercher	Dec. 1847
34. Katherine (Shoemaker) Geiger	Jan. 1848
35. Mary Lehman	Jan. 1848
36. Christian Ramsier	Jan. 1849
37. Christian Tschantz, Deacon	Feb. 1849
38. Anna (Thut) Hofstetter	July 1849
39. John Thut	Dec. 1849
40. Anna (Lugenbuhl) Lehman	Mar. 1850
41. Christian Beer	Apr. 1850

42. Verena Bixler	July 1851
43. Marian (Lehman) Lehman	Dec. 1852
44. John Sprunger, Deacon	May 1853
45. Michael Begley	July 1853
46. David Baumgardner, Minister	Nov. 1853
47. Christian Hofstetter	June 1855
48. Elizabeth (Gerber) Gerber	Dec. 1855
49. Anna Welty	Apr. 1856
50. Johannes Lehman	July 1856
51. Magdalena (Lehman) Lehman	Dec. 1856
52. Christian Lehman	Dec. 1856
53. Peter Gerber	Feb. 1857
54. Magdalena Welty	Apr. 1857
55. John Gerber	Nov. 1857
56. Isaac Falb	Oct. 1858
57. Verena Welty	May 1860
58. Elizabeth (Sattler) Wali	Oct. 1858
59. Peter G. Tschantz	Jan. 1861

The above were all buried in the Old Burial Ground.

Millersburg, Ohio

Polk City, Iowa, Church

DELBERT GRATZ

The old record book of the Swiss Mennonite community near Bluffton, Ohio, contains an entry by Bishop Christian Suter concerning the Swiss Mennonite Church organized at Polk City, Iowa, in 1858. The entry is in German. Translated, it states:

"In this year [1858] I was in Iowa, or to write correctly in the state of Iowa in the month of August and have baptized nine and appointed two ministers, Joseph Schroder to the office of preacher of the Gospel and John Neuenschwander to the office of deacon. The names of the ones baptized are these:

Joseph Schröder
Martin Frey
Daniel Neuenschwander
Peter Neuenschwander
Barbara Neuenschwander
Anna Neuenschwander
Elizabeth Neuenschwander
Catharina Neuenschwander
Veronica Neuenschwander

The Wakarusa, Indiana, *Sun*, reviewed in the July 1961 *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* is deposited in the library of Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana.

A Note on the Diener-Versammlung of 1866

MELVIN GINGERICH

The fifth annual Minister's Meeting of the Amish Mennonites was held May 20-23, 1866, at the home of Johannes Struphar, near Danvers, in McLean County, Illinois. Among those present for part of the conference was Christian Erismann, who was born in Germany in 1835, and migrated to America in 1857, where he settled in Illinois, and later became a schoolteacher. Erismann entered the following record in his diary (deposited in the Archives of the Mennonite Church):

"Today, the 24th of May; only this morning I came home from the conference. The past Saturday I went to Daniel Schönbeck's for whom my brother works. From there we went to the meeting at Johan Strupp's, where the meeting was in the morning and also in the afternoon. There was really good and serious preaching by many strange preachers; in the evening I was again with Schönbeck and my brother. On Sunday there were very many people assembled, who heard the sermons; I believe that there were almost twelve hundred.

"On Monday we were there again, namely, Daniel Schönbeck, Jacob Schönbeck, my brother, and I.

"Monday, the 21st of May, 1866, therefore, the conference began at Johann Strupp's, Danvers, McLean Co., Ill., and lasted until Wednesday evening, the 24th of May, 1866. It pleased me very well, especially the last discourses delivered by Johann K. Yorder from Ohio, Abraham Mast from Pa., and ——— Troyer from Indiana, which were very fine, moving addresses. And the entire conference which lasted three days, and very many people were gathered together, was the greatest peace and order.

"Would the dear God His rich blessing give to the end that the Mennonites would unite again. O! how much better and more pleasant it would be if with united strength we would strive toward the goal set before us; I cherish the hope that it will still come to that, if not all, at least the greater part."

History of the Arthur Amish Mennonite Church

ORVA HELMUTH

In March 1865 four Old Order Amish families from Somerset County, Pa., moved into the Arthur, Illinois, community. This was the first of an Amish settlement in the Arthur area.

In November 1883 the Eli D. Troyer family moved to the Arthur community from Holmes County, Ohio. Mr. and Mrs. Troyer were members of the Walnut Creek Amish Mennonite church. They were the first Amish Mennonite family in the Arthur community. The Troyers intended to unite with the Old Order Amish church, but so much was asked of them that they felt that they could not comply with all that was required to make this change from the Amish Mennonite church to the Amish Church so that they gave it up. For a number of years, ministers from Howard County, Indiana, came once or twice a year to preach for the Troyers. Also other ministers who passed through the community would stop with them.

The Troyer family attended the Old Order Amish church quite regularly but were still members of the Amish Mennonite Church. After living under these conditions for about 10 years, the older children growing up without a church home, the Troyers felt there could be a change for the spiritual good of the children.

By this time the John D. Mast family and the Jerry D. Mast family had moved into the community from Howard County, Indiana. There were also a few young men from Iowa, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Maryland working in the community, who were members of the Amish Mennonite church in their home community. These young men did not feel at home in the Old Order Amish church. There were also others who were not satisfied in the Amish church.

Eli D. Troyer with the help of the Amish Mennonites living in the community and others who were interested started a Sunday school in the Bolinger School house. This was around 1893. John Zook, a young man from Indiana, was elected superintendent and Eli D. Troyer chorister. The school was filled every Sunday; some of the Amish young folks attended the Sunday school, although they were not supposed to and were warned not to attend it.

About this time the Abe D. Mast family and Joe D. Mast family (brothers of Jerry and John Mast) also moved into the community. The Mast families all lived here for a few years, then one by one they

moved to Hopedale, Illinois, but Abe stayed a few years longer.

Eli D. Troyer was wanting to buy a farm in the community and had a deal made on a farm but it fell through, there being very few farms in the community for sale. Mr. Troyer anxious to have a farm of his own went back to Ohio and bought a farm. So in February 1895 the Troyer family moved back to Ohio.

In 1896 the Arthur Amish Mennonite church was organized in the Jerry D. Mast home. Jerry at that time lived on the first road north of Arthur and east the first house across the railroad track.

Fred Mast, a minister of Berlin, Ohio, helped organize the church and baptized the first local members. Charter members included the Mast families, Seth P. Herschberger, Joe J. Helmuth, Simon D. Miller, Ernest Wingard, Lovina Helmuth, Sovilla Miller, Lydia Miller, the John Keim family, Mose and Mary Yutzy Helmuth, Joni and Annie Yutzy Helmuth, Wes Troyer, Eli Z. Y. Miller, Isaiah and Maggie Kohli, Chauncy Miller, and Noah Yutzy.

The Amish Mennonite congregation built its church house in 1897. The location was north of Arthur to the second road going west, right on the corner. Land was bought from Joseph Helmuth (father of Joni, Mose, Joe J., and Lavina Helmuth) for \$50 with the understanding that if it is no longer used for church purposes it returns to the farm.

The first church treasurer was Seth P. Herschberger. Records show that he received \$333.88 for the building fund from twenty members. He also received \$169.65 from thirty-four persons and business houses in Arthur. The record also gives names of donations from different churches in Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Iowa, and Pennsylvania. The total fund received was \$1025.99. This was all the money that was spent on the purchase of ground, material for building, labor, well and pump. Digging the well and pump complete cost \$27.50. Joni Helmuth was in charge of the building. A lot of labor was donated by the members. Isaac A. Miller was the first minister but later moved to Michigan. Seth P. Herschberger was then ordained minister by lot but he later moved to Shipshewana, Indiana. Once again the lot was used to ordain; Simon D. Miller, John Keim, and Mose J. Helmuth were chosen by the congregation; Mose J. Helmuth was ordained minister. This was in 1906.

On Oct. 3, 1908, Mose J. Helmuth died of typhoid fever at the age of 46 years 16 days. After the death of Mose J. Helmuth, visiting ministers served the church from time to time. John Birky of Hopedale served the group as bishop for some time. Daniel Nafziger of Hopedale, Samuel Garber of Tremont, John Smith of Eureka, and Simon Litwiler of Hopedale served the church at different times.

According to the record book of the church the following were members.

James and Minnie Miller
Isiah and Maggie Kohli
Abner Miller
Joe J. and Lovina Helmuth
Sovilla Miller
Barbara Mast
Amanda Helmuth
Allen Miller
Mose and Mary M. Helmuth
Jerry and Lydia Mast
Joni and Annie Helmuth
Seth P. and Susan Herschberger
Simon D. and Lovina Miller
Jerry J. Troyer
Wes. and Minnie E. Troyer
Isaac A. Miller
Noah C. Yutzy
Nemie A. Miller
Martha Miller
Mary A. Miller
John Slonicker
Emma Brobest
Fannie Stutzman

The following were members later:

S. J. Miller
Ema Miller
Jennie Yutzy
Millie Miller
Clara Helmuth
Seth Miller
Eli Z. Y. Miller
Thomas Williamson
Joe Y. Miller
Ben W. Keim
T. A. Miller
Amanda Kemp
Magdalena Miller
John and May Burkey
Silas Herschberger
Peter Christophel
Fannie Miller
Susan Keim
John Keim
Lydia Miller
Frank Keim
Harve J. Miller
Dan. S. Miller
Elmer Helmuth
Barbara A. Miller
Abe B. Beachy
Clara Miller
Christian Hostetler
William Flinger

The first trustees were elected in 1897. The first three elected were Seth P. Herschberger, Mose J. Helmuth, and Abe D. Mast. Other trus-

tees during the years were as follows:

Simon D. Miller
Abner Miller
Tom Williamson
Isaac Miller
Joe J. Helmuth
Joni Helmuth
Frank Keim
Elmer Helmuth
Noah C. Yutzy

According to the church record book the following were Sunday school superintendents: James Miller, Abe D. Mast, Mose J. Helmuth, and Seth Herschberger. Frank Keim was the last one to serve as Superintendent. Abe D. Mast and Amanda Helmuth were the only names given as church chorister but there may have been others whose names were not recorded. Amanda Helmuth also served as Sunday school secretary.

By the year of 1910 or 1912 many of the members had moved away to larger Mennonite communities. Some went to Hopedale, Illinois; Howard County, Indiana; Shipshewana, Indiana, and still others to the Archbold, Ohio, area.

In December 1914 Mr. and Mrs. Frank Keim and Mrs. Keim's mother Mrs. Mose J. Helmuth and two sons and also another son Elmer Helmuth and wife moved to the Archbold, Ohio, area. These were the last of the members who were still living in the Arthur area at that time.

So after about 17 years the doors of the Arthur Amish Mennonite church on the county line closed its doors never to open again as a church.

From the Arthur *Graphic-Clarion*, Arthur, Illinois, under the date of Friday, March 26, 1915, the following advertisement appeared.

Church for Sale

The Amish Mennonite Church is to be sold at private sale. Parties interested should see H. M. Rigney. Price \$200 for quick sale.

H. M. Rigney was editor of the Arthur *Graphic-Clarion*. The Western District A. M. conference minutes for 1916 reported that the church had been sold.

A few items of interest from the church record book show that the men were taxed \$1.00 per year and women 25¢ per year for the upkeep of the church.

Total upkeep expense in 1898 was \$10.24

Tax money received was \$12.75
Expense for 1899 was \$9.35

Tax money received was \$13.50

In 1905 the janitor received \$1.00 per month and the janitor job was rotated from member to member. Each janitor served about 2 months and then some one else took his turn as janitor for 2 months. In 1902 Simon D. Miller was paid \$1.75 per day to paint the church.

In 1904 a piece of ground was bought from Sam Miller on the north side of the road and a little farther west for a cemetery. This ground was also tiled, but it was never used for burial purposes.

Memories of the Arthur Amish Mennonite Church

In writing to those who were members of the Arthur Amish Mennonite church and others for information regarding that church, many wrote of the memories that they have regarding the church or incidents that happened during that time.

Simon D. Miller remembers that C. Z. Yoder and Eli Frey conducted a Bible Conference at the church. Simon and Lovina Miller walked and carried their first son Amra (born in Sept. 1898) all the way from Fairbanks where they lived at that time to the church because Simon was janitor. This was a distance of 4½ miles. It seems many of the members walked 4 or 5 miles or more to church on Sunday morning. Simon remembers that one minister baptized a group of converts in the creek south of the church.

After the death of Mose J. Helmuth, the visiting ministers would come on Saturday and stay until Monday morning. By this time the Simon Miller family had moved to the east edge of Arthur on the north side of the road, and visiting ministers would stay with them very often. Miller says that one time it was necessary to tie a single buggy behind the surry which the Miller family of seven used so that Bishop John Birky could be taken to church. Bishop Birky said that riding like that was better than walking because of the mud. The muddy roads made it necessary to take the farm wagon occasionally as a transportation to go to church.

Mattie Miller Shellenberger says that she still has some of the Sunday school cards from Arthur that date back to 1909. She also remembers the large kerosene lamps hanging from the ceiling.

At conference time Simon D. Miller often rented a hack from the livery stable in Arthur to haul people to the meetings and back to town for trains. The Simon D. Miller family moved to Fulton County, Ohio, in 1912.

Clara Helmuth Keim remembers

that the roads would get so muddy that the mud would fall off the buggy wheels in chunks almost as big as a bushel basket.

Elizabeth Troyer Yoder of West Liberty, Ohio, remembers that Amanda, wife of John D. Mast, died on Easter Sunday March 26, 1894, and is buried in the Otto cemetery. Elizabeth is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Eli D. Troyer and gave all the information concerning the Troyer family.

Menno L. Troyer, Bishop of Central Church, Elida, Ohio, Noah E. Troyer (not living now) formerly bishop at West Liberty, Ohio, and Mrs. John I. Byler, Shipshewana, Indiana, are all children of the Eli D. Troyers.

Arthur W. Nafziger, Mennonite church historian for the Illinois conference, gave the following information about Abe and John Mast. As of January 1, 1958, Abe D. Mast was living at the Mennonite Old Peoples Home, Eureka, Illinois. He was past 90 years old and was very feeble, practically blind and deaf. (Abe D. Mast has since died.)

John D. Mast moved to Hopedale, Illinois, in 1895, where he married again, and after he had two more children, his second wife died and is buried in the Hopedale Mennonite Cemetery. After that time John moved considerably and eventually died following an auto accident. He is buried in the Shore Mennonite cemetery, Shipshewana, Indiana. He was 84 years old at the time of his death.

Ezra B. Yordy, retired bishop, Eureka, Illinois, remembers as a boy of 16 years old he lived at Fisher, Illinois. From there Ezra and his older brother and two sisters drove to Arthur with a team of horses and buggy, for a Bible Conference, with D. D. Miller, Middlebury, Indiana, and Samuel Gerber, Tremont, Illinois as speakers.

Bro. Yordy says that Mose J. Helmuth, the minister, was sick in bed during the conference. This was possibly in 1908. There was also a communion service at the church and a group from Shelbyville, Illinois, came up for this service. There was one thing that he could never forget, that as D. D. Miller was having a Bible lesson, a group of young people came by the church in a wagon and stopped near the church and began to shout and make a lot of noise. D. D. Miller went over to the window, opened it and said "You think you are smart but you will learn better some day, I trust." Miller shut the window, the young people drove on, and he finished his Bible lesson.

L. O. Helmuth, son of Mose Helmuth, says that he was only 6 years

old when his father died, but that he still remembers the hitch rack for the buggys which was along the north fence and west fence. The entrance to the church grounds was at the north east corner. There was also a cement block step north of the church for buggys to drive up to, to load and unload, as well as a large lantern hanging on a post beside the steps.

Members still living in 1958 were

- Joe J. and Lovina Helmuth, Kokomo, Ind.
 Frank and Amanda Helmuth Keim, Wauseon, Ohio.
 Simon D. Miller, Stryker, Ohio.
 Clara Helmuth Keim, Archbold, Ohio.
 Emma Helmuth Miller, Morence, Michigan.
 Abe Mast, Mennonite Old Peoples Home, Eureka, Ill.
 Lydia Miller, married Thomas Williamson and after his death she married Joe Y. Miller, also one of the early members and they now live at Sarasota, Florida.
 Susan, wife of John Keim, Mennonite Old Peoples Home, Eureka, Ill.
 Magdalena Miller, now Mrs. John K. Miller, Nappanee, Ind.

The following are buried in the Otto cemetery:

- Martha, daughter of Eli D. Troyer, died May 1, 1886—age 8 yrs., 6 mos., 23 days.
 Lydia, wife of Jerry D. Mast, died Feb. 25, 1901—age 39 yrs., 7 mos., 24 days.
 Mose J. Helmuth, died Oct. 3, 1908—age 46 yrs., 16 days.
 Mary, wife of Mose J. Helmuth, died Sept. 5, 1935—age 72 yrs., 9 mos., 25 days.
 Noah C. Yutzy, died June 23, 1943—age 74 yrs., 2 mos., 18 days.
 Amanda, wife of John D. Mast, died March 26, 1894—age 37 yrs., 11 mos., 21 days.

I am indebted to Elizabeth Troyer Yoder for information about the Eli D. Troyer family and the starting of the Sunday school at Bolinger school house, to Perry Beachy for information he copied out of the church record book which Mrs. Amanda Helmuth Keim still has in her possession, also to the *Mennonite Encyclopedia*.

Arthur, Illinois

Bound copies of twenty years of the *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* can be ordered from the editor for \$5.00.

David Zuercher (1803-1879) Autobiography

(The following autobiography of David Zuercher was written during the last year of his life to his brother John, on "Talawang" in Switzerland, Bernese Jura. At the time of his death, he was a member of the Sonnenberg Mennonite Church, Apple Creek, Ohio. The copy of the autobiography was furnished by Simon Sommer, Route 4, Millersburg, Ohio, who is a great grandson of David Zuercher. Zuercher was a veterinarian, a profession which he probably learned in Pennsylvania. His son Peter also followed this profession. He was born August 19, 1803, and died December 24, 1879. M.G.)

I remember that I was three years old at the death of my mother in the spring of 1807 at La Chand Abel, my birthplace. The youngest child was only six weeks old. She was buried at St. Immer on an inclement day. My father hired Magdalena Graber to work for us; but she was itchy and infected all of us children with her disease. Father had to grease us all over. The older brothers went away to Sonnenberg (Switzerland) and father moved into a house at Ulrich Bartschirs with us four boys. Christian went to live with Peter Steffen and Stephen with Peter Lehman in "Tschamp sasser"; but I can not remember where Hans went. Then a vicious disease came to Sonnenberg. Many died of it. Among them was Peter Steffen and Hofstettler and wife. The latter two were placed into one grave. (Elizabeth Hofstettler's great-grandparents.) After that father took us to Court-lebe Lisen to take care of oxen in pasture. Then came the year 1816 which was very rainy. It rained much and snowed every month. So we had to take the cattle into the village. We had neither shoes nor stockings. The next year (1817) Samuel and I had to take care of sheep in the fields, and had to stay out in all kinds of weather, and go to the mountains again in the evening. Often we were very hungry and had very poor clothing. The next year (1818) I was the only herdsman for about 100 goats. That was better than keeping sheep. I could be in the forest. The hard times from 1816 until 1817 I shall never forget.

From the "Lisen" we went to Garoli near Soure Mont, and stayed there about two years. Then we boys were separated. Ulrich went to Christian Tschantz's, Samuel went to Abraham Zuercher, and I came to "Talawang" to stay with my uncle as errand and all purpose boy. I knew the French quite well and so was often sent long distances

on errands; often in a half-day as far as "Sassi" and back again. I was acquainted in all the villages of St. Immer valley and was sent on errands far and wide by my uncle.

In 1821 the second wave of immigration to America got hold of us, and Samuel and I were persuaded by uncle Abraham to accompany him to America. In April we two brothers visited our brother Ulrich at Christian Tschantz's and stayed with him over night. In the evening when we went to bed Ulrich said sadly, "I wish God would let us get sick till morning so we could not get up until we promised not to go." But all to no avail. We were bound to go. The following day he came with us to Zwieboden. He wept so he could not speak, and when we said good bye he wept loudly. We could hear him a long way. We went to Sonnenberg and from there to Fundo to see Ulrich Beer who gave us each ten pennies for a farewell. Then we went to see Abraham Schneck. He gave five pennies to each of us and said as a farewell, "Always keep God in your mind. That is the best for you." Then I went back to Talauny and on the following day I said good bye there and went on my journey to Datrian where my baggage was examined to see if there was any contraband. But everything was all right. Some had to pay toll. Then we went slowly on. I usually traveled on foot. Sometimes I hung on to the stagecoach or post carts, and so got a ride for several miles. Then I rested until the others caught up with me. In this way I got to look at cities and villages. Once when we stayed over night there was a walled-in pond to water horses. There I had to ride each horse into the water, and I had to swim, because none of the others could swim. I liked swimming. The third horse was white, owned by preacher Hans Lehman. Its shoes caught while swimming and threw it under the water. I held on. It sank two or three times. I jumped upon the wall, and saved myself after my traveling companions thought I was lost. We finally saved the horse with a long rope. The next day we went on again. After three weeks we reached Havre, where we had to wait three weeks for a ship. As the tides rose and fell every 24 hours the harbor would be empty and the ships stuck in the mud. I used to go to the harbor to see all kinds of sea animals. I had explored the whole city when finally the order came to go aboard ship. When all was ready our ship, the "Thetis," was towed out of the harbor with a

long rope by man power, and soon we could see nothing but sky and water. Then we began to throw up our food. Several days the wind was favorable and we made fine progress. Then the wind quieted down. We had good weather, then a great number of fish disturbed the water. The captain believed it forbode storm, and soon there was a heavy storm, so that the waves rolled over the ship. So we were put back. One day we noticed back of us, a ship which came nearer every day. The captain thought it was a robber and a strict watch was kept. As it came near everybody was ordered on deck, armed with guns and sticks. The other ship hoisted a flag of peace and came so near that the captains could talk through speaking tubes. Then they went away again. After a journey of 44 days on the ocean we landed at New York on July 4th where we remained several days. Then Uncle Abraham Zuercher went to Trenton, the others to Philadelphia. We crossed the state of New York on foot through wilderness and could not always find a place to stay. I took my knapsack for a pillow and slept peacefully. In Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, we met our fellow travelers again in the beginning of August, and there we also met good Mennonites. Uncle Zuercher was out of money, so he asked the Mennonite ministers for advice concerning myself and my brother Samuel. They told him he should sell us, and asked him how much we had cost him. He replied: \$63.

Preacher Brubacher said, "I will see about it." The next day several came to look us over. I lay there in the grass just like an underfed pig, very tired. I pulled myself together and the one that wanted me asked me if I would work good and faithfully for him. I said, "Yes," although he had said I was too little. Samuel was somewhat bigger than I. He stayed at Brubacher's. He paid \$63 and took Samuel along. Then Uncle Abraham journeyed to Ohio and bought himself a piece of land. I had a good master; but his hired man was very rough with me. I was to do more work than my strength allowed. Once my master saw me weep at my work. Then he asked the hired man why this happened, then gave orders not to abuse me any more. I might run away. But to no avail. After a while he told the man he could collect his wages and leave. He would not have me abused; he had paid for me. After the man had left I had to handle the four horses. They were large, lively animals, and I was small and not strong. I could hardly harness them. One evening the

master told me to get the wagon ready as we would drive to Columbia in the morning after a load of lumber. This worried me so I could not sleep. Early in the morning I got at it and hitched up the four horses. The master came and inspected everything, then told me to sit on a horse. Suddenly they lunged forward past the corner of the barn and broke the wagon. I wept, but he said, "That is nothing; that will soon be repaired." Soon the wagon was repaired. And then the master rode one of the front horses. He rode so fast that I could hardly keep my seat. He accompanied me twice. Afterwards I went alone. The master commended me to the neighbors for my carefulness and faithfulness. I served him five years. Then his son took up my work, and the nearest neighbor, Jacob Harnish, who had wanted me in the first place, hired me, and I went there and had to drive a big team. They often sent me to the veterinary to acquire something of his profession. One time I was on that trip for three weeks. After three years I journeyed to Ohio, on foot, about 450 miles to see my acquaintances. But I did not like it in the forest; so I went back to Pennsylvania where I stayed another two years. Then I went to Ohio again, on foot. I took my money along, \$450, and bought 80 acres of woodland for \$500.65. Then I had to work in the forest. Part of the time I worked at the carpenter trade.

On November 5, 1831, I married Eliabeth Lehman and we moved into a small log hut. I am now 76 years old and my memory is failing; so I have forgotten many things. For a long time I had kept no record because I could not write, as I had never been to school, and had to learn it all by myself. When I went away from my uncle (17 years old) I could neither read nor write, only spell a little.

A QUERY

In the April 1961 *Bulletin* appeared an old letter of August 29, 1847, signed by six Lancaster Mennonite Conference Ministers concerning the Oberholtzer schism in the Franconia Mennonite Conference. The editor does not know from where he received the typed, translated letter which was reproduced in the April issue. Are other copies in existence and if so, where? Is the original German copy still extant? Any additional information on this letter will be appreciated by the editor.

Mennonites in Gentry County, Missouri

(The following letter appeared in the *Herald der Wahrheit* in September 1878. It refers to an extinct settlement in north-western Missouri. Any readers who have any information on this settlement are urged to communicate with the editor. The translation was done by John Umble. The letter does not appear in the *Herald of Truth*. Preacher John Ummel died in Gentry County, Missouri, December 19, 1883, age 52 years, 8 months, and 13 days. Six children were living by the first wife and three by the second. The obituary states "May the kind heavenly Father raise up again a faithful laborer for the deserted little flock for whom he so earnestly labored." M.G.)

Dear Brother J. F. Funk:

Grace and peace from God the Father through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ be with us all. Amen.

With the assistance of Jesus Christ we have finally succeeded in founding a congregation for the Lord our God and Almighty Father, for which we, in childlike trust, believe that we have Jesus Christ, the great Master Builder of the Church of God, as the Foundation and Corner-Stone, which stands immovable.

In the year 1874, my wife, my brother and I set out from Davis county, Iowa, in hopes of making our home in distant Kansas. When, however, on account of bad weather and terribly bad roads, we could not continue our journey any farther, I wrote to my friend, Ulrich Amstutz, Buhlsville, Gentry county, Mo., to rent a piece of land for us for a place to stay for the summer. This he also did. From here we intended to continue our journey to Kansas in the fall. Unfortunately, however, the grasshoppers covered that section of Kansas in droves; hence we decided to remain here.

In the year 1876, my brother-in-law, Abraham Ummel followed us here, and in the year 1877 brother and Preacher John Ummel of Davis county, Iowa, moved here. Now we can rejoice in a beautiful meeting and a blossoming Sunday school which we organized on Easter Sunday in the year 1877. Under God's assistance it is flourishing up to now although still small. Not only Amish brethren and sisters take part in meeting and Sunday school, but also other professed believers and we live in peace with one another.

We live in a good, beautiful region, healthful climate, and have

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Ohio Ministers Who Signed Ohio Conference Minutes A Century Ago

WILMER D. SWOPE

In the *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* for October 1950, Vol. XI, No. 4, appeared an article on "Minutes of Ohio Conference A Century Ago," by Ira D. Landis. Two of the signers of these minutes, Henry Stemen and Abraham Rohrer, are well known and are identified by Landis. Three of the additional signers Isaac Kilmer, John Miller, and Henry Stauffer can now be located, without much doubt as to their home locality. Jacob Muschler has not been located, but possibly was from one of the Ashland County, Ohio, churches. Isaac Kilmer is identified as Isaac Wilmer in the Landis article.

ISAAC KILMER moved from Juniata County, Pennsylvania, to Ashland County, Ohio. Kilmer was ordained a bishop for Brubakers and Pleasant Ridge churches before 1830 by bishop Jacob Nold of Fairfield township, Columbiana County, Ohio.¹ On September 1, 1835, Isaac Kilmer performed the wedding ceremony of Mary Oberholtzer and Adam Rosenbarger. Mary Oberholtzer was the daughter of Bishop Jacob Oberholtzer and his second wife Elizabeth Mellinger Oberholtzer, who moved from Beaver Township, Columbiana County, Ohio, to Ashland County, in 1834. Jacob Oberholtzer must have served in the ministry at Brubakers and Pleasant Ridge from 1834 to 1847.

JOHN MILLER (-1845), a minister who it is reported served the Columbiana County, Ohio, Mennonite church for an undetermined number of years. Miller moved to Lee County, Iowa, in the spring of 1845 and was murdered by robbers. His death in the year 1845 would place the date of this conference prior to 1845, possibly 1843 or 1844.²

HENRY STAUFFER (1781-1851), came to Green township, Columbiana County, Ohio, (Mahoning County after 1846) from Fayette County, Pennsylvania, in 1801. Henry Stauffer was ordained a minister in 1815, the first minister to be ordained to serve the Columbiana County, Mennonite church. Jacob Nold was alone

in the bishop oversight of the church in Columbiana County when bishop Jacob Oberholtzer moved to Ashland County in 1834. It is likely that Stauffer was ordained to assist Nold in ca. 1834. After the death of Nold in 1835, Henry Stauffer was the bishop in charge until sometime in the eighteen forties when Rudolph Blosser was ordained to assist Stauffer. It is thought that a daughter of Henry Stauffer (Elizabeth) was married to Jonathan Oberholtzer, son of bishop Jacob Oberholtzer. Henry Stauffer is buried in the old cemetery at Midway church, Columbiana, Ohio.³

¹ See *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Vol. IV, pages 619 and 620, "Stauffer Family."

MENNONITES IN GENTRY COUNTY, MISSOURI

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sufficient wood and water. The land is somewhat rolling, but good; good for fruit and grape culture, as well as very good for corn, wheat, rye, oats, etc., not grown on a large scale, however. Cattle raising is the greatest occupation here, because there still is so much prairie land. Land is very cheap. Unbroken prairie, from \$7.00 to \$10.00 per acre. Cultivated farms, from 15 to 20 dollars per acre.

Our wish is that several more brethren might settle here. We believe that none would regret it.

If brethren wish to inspect this region, let them take the Quincy, Hannibal and St. Joseph Railway as far as Osborn, DeKalb Co., Mo., and from there the mail coach to Berlin, Gentry Co., Mo., where they will find a friendly reception from me as well as also with all the brethren.

Jacob Aeby
Berlin, Gentry Co., Mo.

James Ronald Gibson wrote a master's thesis at the University of Oregon in 1959 on "A Comparison of Anglo-Saxon, Mennonite, and Dutch Farms in the Lower Fraser River Valley: A Methodological Study in Areal Differentiation and the Relative Influence of the Physical and Cultural Environments."

In 1924 David Vincent Wiebe wrote a master's thesis at the University of Kansas on "The Mennonite Institutions of Higher Learning in Kansas with Special Reference to Their Educational Investments and Educational Contributions."

History of the Latschar Mennonite Church

GEORGE MILNE

The Latschar Mennonite Church is located near Mannheim, Ontario. The church was so named because the land for church purposes was bought from Isaac Latschar in 1839 for about \$4.20. John Christner and Moses Eby (Grandfather of Dan Eby) served as the first trustees.

An additional piece of land was purchased in 1864 from Ben Bowman. Orphen Weber has the original deed. David Eschelman, who was trustee at this time, in 1859 became Deacon.

The following pioneer families came into this area from Pennsylvania: Latschar, Christner, Hunsberger, Bowman, Hallman, Bergey, and Shantz. From Switzerland came: Boesinger and Geiger. Families from Germany included Brandt, Hodel, Bachert, Bleam and Spaetzel.

The first organized church work by the Mennonites in the community was begun about 1832. Jacob Hallman, Grandfather of Mannaseh Hallman, became minister in 1836. Moses S. Bowman became minister early in the 1850's and served about 45 years. His son, Moses C. Bowman was ordained in 1889.

Mannaseh Hallman, Grandson of Jacob Hallman, was called to the ministry in 1907 and 3 years later was ordained as bishop. He was the first minister to preach in the English language. J. Wesley Witmer became minister in 1922 after having been deacon for a few years. Lorne Schmitt was ordained in 1934 to assist in this congregation as well as in other needy fields. Osiah Horst is the present minister. The deacons in this church have been David Eshleman, Henry Baer, J. W. Witmer, Isaiah Witmer and Orphen Weber.

The first church building, erected about 1839, was a log structure. A stone building replaced the log one in 1853. The present church was built in 1908 and enlarged in 1923.

Early records show that preaching services at first were held every four weeks. Communion was once a year, alternating with Geigers. Up until 1907 the preaching was in German.

Sunday school was conducted in this church as early as 1874. Moses Bowman was the first superintendent. Four years earlier, however, a union Sunday school was held in the school house with Jacob Bergey, a Mennonite and George Pepler, a Lutheran, as leaders. Dan Eby's mother travelled by horseback from

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¹ See *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, page 442, "Brubaker's Church."

² Notes by minister David Lehman on leaders of Mennonite church in Columbiana and Mahoning counties, Ohio. These notes list a Miller who went to Iowa and was killed by robbers in 1845. These notes are deposited in Columbiana-Mahoning congregation file in the Mennonite Archives at Goshen, Indiana.

Mennonite Research News and Notes

MELVIN GINGERICH

Peter J. Klassen is doing a doctoral dissertation at the University of Southern California on "Economic Views of the Anabaptists." He spent four weeks in July-August, 1961, working in the Goshen College Historical Library.

The Pulaski Mennonite Church, Pulaski, Iowa, celebrated its one hundredth anniversary on July 14, 15, and 16, 1961. The congregation issued a 28 page booklet on the history of their church for this occasion. Copies may be obtained for fifty cents each from James Baughman, Bloomfield, Iowa.

E. Grant Herr, principal of the Spring Grove Joint School System, Spring Grove, Pennsylvania, wrote a master's thesis at the University of Vermont in 1934 on "The Development of Education Among the Mennonites of America."

Harold H. Schaff wrote a doctor's dissertation at Cornell University in 1930 on "Social and Political Theory and Practice Among Certain Anabaptist Groups Till 1535."

Frederick W. H. Wright, Wolf Lake, Indiana, completed a master's thesis at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1957 on "The Views on Baptism of Certain Leading Biblical Anabaptists 1524-1614."

George David Pries completed a master's thesis at the University of Wichita in June 1958 on "Mennonite Brethren Religious Thinking."

Renze Otto De Groot completed a dissertation for the Th.D. degree at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in May 1947 on "The Faith of the Dutch Anabaptists."

Gary J. Waltner wrote a 62 page research paper at Bethel College in 1961 on "A Study of the Economic Conditions of the Swiss Mennonites of Dakota, 1874-1882." Mimeographed copies are available from Cornelius Krahn, North Newton, Kansas, for \$1.00. The paper has detailed information on loans extended to the Mennonite immigrants by their brethren in communities farther east, including those in Lancaster County, Pa.

"Notes and Queries in Brethren in Christ History" is a six page mimeographed quarterly issued by the Archives of the Brethren in Christ Church, Grantham, Pennsylvania.

Three of the four grandchildren of John F. Funk recently visited the Mennonite Historical Library and Archives of the Mennonite Church at Goshen, Indiana. They are the children of A. B. and Phoebe (Funk) Kolb.

Dirk Philips

WILLIAM KEENEY

If we were to accept nominations for the "forgotten man" of Mennonite history, Dirk Philips might well find a place on the ballot. He did not attain to the stature of Menno Simons as an organizer and leader in the early days of the Anabaptist movement, nevertheless, he was second only to Menno in importance among the Dutch brethren.

Dirk was born at Leeuwarden in the Netherlands in 1504, the son of a priest and the brother of Obbe Philips. He was baptized very shortly after Obbe in the week between Christmas 1533 and January 2, 1534. He labored zealously along with Obbe in those confused days when the movement was young. They soon separated themselves from and opposed the revolutionary Anabaptists, such as those who attempted to set up the Kingdom of God by force and violence in the city of Münster. Obbe ordained Dirk as a bishop at Appingdam, in the northwestern corner of the Netherlands, probably about the time that Menno joined the movement and was ordained to a similar office at Groningen.

During the turbulent years that followed, Obbe withdrew from the Anabaptists and other colleagues, such as David Joris and Adam Pastor, who developed extreme ideas and were rejected. Among the early prominent leaders, only Menno and Dirk stayed by the brotherhood until the time of their death and loyally worked together to build it up.

Dirk participated in every major conference of Anabaptist leaders in the Dutch-North German area after 1540. We find traces of his activity all the way from Utrecht in the Netherlands, to his home city of Leeuwarden, to Emden and Hamburg in northwestern Germany, and as far east as the Prussian area around Danzig. It was in the Danzig area that he found a more or less permanent and peaceful field of labor for several years immediately preceding his death. He died in 1568 near Emden, seven years after the death of Menno.

Menno appears to have been the more aggressive of the two, in communicating his views of the Christian life and the church through writing, and his first tracts appeared around 1535 and 1536. The earliest known work published by Dirk dates from 1544 or 1545. From this time new writings appeared periodically and continued until the very closing days of his life. His major work appeared in 1564, when he re-edited all of his earlier published writings and added some new ones

to produce the *Enchiridion* or *Handbook of the Christian Doctrine and Religion*, to use the English title. The high quality of this work had led many scholars, such as W. J. Kühler, N. van der Zijpp, and H. Dosker, to consider Dirk the ablest theologian among his Dutch Anabaptist contemporaries.

Dirk's writings have been translated into German, French, and English. Only one English translation is available, however, and it is not satisfactory. It does not include all of Dirk's works and it was made from a German translation rather than from a Dutch one. Also, after it was published a new Dutch collection of all of Dirk's known writings, except one handwritten treatise on the ban and related topics, was compiled.

As stated in the introductory paragraph, Dirk, despite his significance, is in a sense a "forgotten man" in Mennonite history. No major biographic study of his life has been published. Relatively little attention has been given to his thought by American scholars, perhaps because of lack of a critical English translation, and the language barrier involved. A study of Dirk's Christology made by Cornelius Dyck, appeared in *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, July, 1957. *Mennonite Life* in April 1958 published an article on Dirk's life in order to acquaint more people with the significant role which he played in Mennonite history. A recent volume of the Library of Christian Classics, *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, contains a very good translation of Dirk's view of "The Church of God," pp. 226-260. This should be only a beginning. We cannot fully understand our heritage from the past without an acquaintance with the life, work, and writings of Dirk Philips. The basic issues which he faced in seeking to live the full Christian life and to establish the true church are similar to ours today. He may speak a word to our generation.

Bluffton, Ohio

LATSCHAR MENNONITE CHURCH

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Berlin (now Kitchener) to the Public School at Manheim to teach. Sam Bachart became superintendent about 1876 and continued for 20 years. He was followed by Samuel Herner and Aaron and Noah Bowman. J. W. Witmer served for 18 years and Leslie Witmer for 15. Since then superintendents have been changed oftener.

Young People's meetings were begun in 1892 in the homes. The aim of these meetings was to develop the Christian life and experience of the young people. (Sept. 1960)

